

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3795

S E C R E T ATHENS 3744

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: VLACHOS APPROACH ON GREEK-TURKISH AEGEAN PROBLEM.

REF: ATHENS 3700

1. VLACHOS, SEC GEN OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, TOLD ME JUNE 14 THAT HE HAD PURPOSELY COME TO BRITISH NATIONAL DAY RECEPTION TO REINFORCE HIS JUNE 13 SUGGESTION (SEE REFTEL) THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER "STRONGLY ADVISE" BOTH THE GREEK AND TURKISH FOREIGN MINISTERS AT OTTAWA TO AGREE TO UNDERTAKE DISCUSSIONS AT AN EARLY DATE REGARDING PETROLEUM EXPLORATION RIGHTS IN THE DISPUTED AEGEAN AREA AND TO FREEZE ALL PETROLEUM EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES DURING THE PERIOD OF DISCUSSION.

2. VLACHOS TOLD ME THAT GOT IN ITS LAST NOTE INDICATED WILLINGNESS TO ABIDE BY "PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW" TO SETTLE PETROLEUM EXPLORATION DISPUTE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. HE CONTRASTED THIS WITH GOG POSITION ON APPLICATION OF INTERNATIONAL LAW SET DOWN IN 1958 CONVENTION AND ICJ DECISION AND ARGUED THAT TURKISH NOTE INDICATED GOT UNWILLING TO RECOGNIZE VALIDITY OF 1958 CONVENTION WHICH EMBODIED LAW. I AGREED THAT 1958 CONVENTION NOW PART OF INTERNATIONAL LAW, ALTHOUGH NOT SIGNED BY GOT, AND NOTED THAT DISCUSSION, EVEN ON GOT BASIS, WOULD INEVITABLY

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BRING ALL ASPECTS OF THE 1958 CONVENTION INTO PLAY.

VLACHOS ADDED THAT CONTINENTAL SHELF AS A CONCEPT CREATED FOR FIRST TIME IN 1958 CONVENTION. THUS GOT NOT ON SOUND LEGAL GROUND IN REJECTING CONTINENTAL SHELF PROVISIONS OF THE CONVENTION BUT SUSTAINING TURKISH CASE UPON ARTICLE RELATIVE TO SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

3. IN VIEW OF AMBASSADOR VLACHOS' EFFORTS AND HOPE TO PERSUADE THE GREEK MILITARY TO ADOPT A MORE REASONABLE POSTURE TOWARDS AEGEAN PROBLEM, HIS SUGGESTION, ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF ITS REPETITION, MERITS SERIOUS CONSIDERATION. BECAUSE OF THE SECRETARY'S HIGH PRESTIGE, ADVICE OF RESTRAINT BY HIM TO BOTH PARTIES, ALONG LINES VLACHOS SUGGESTS, COULD PROVE HIGHLY USEFUL IN DEFUSING THE POTENTIALLY EXPLOSIVE GREEK-TURKISH CONTROVERSY ON THIS SUBJECT. IT COULD ALSO PROVIDE INDEPENDENT AND HENCE FACE-SAVING IMPETUS TO KIND OF BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS THAT SITUATION NOW CLEARLY REQUIRES.

4. IT SEEMS PRUDENT TO ASSUME THAT VLACHOS SOUGHT ME OUT TODAY AS RESULT OF FURTHER DISCUSSION OF AEGEAN PROBLEM WITHIN GREEK ESTABLISHMENT IN WHICH GREEK MILITARY PERSISTED IN INTRANSIGENT ATTITUDE DESPITE MFA URGING THAT GOG'S FIRST RECOURSE SHOULD BE TO PROCEDURES FOR PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT.
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